



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
P.O. Box 1450
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

JGJR.: 06-04

Paper No: 11

STEVENS, DAVIS,
MILLER, & MOESHER
1615 L STREET, N.W.
SUITE 850
WASHINGTON DC 20036-5622

In re Application of
Susnjara, et al.
Application No. 09/919,717
Filing Date: 1 August, 2001
Attorney Docket No. PNL21195

COPY MAILED

JUN 18 2004

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

This is a decision on the petition filed on 24 December, 2003, and, *inter alia*, alleging abandonment due to unintentional delay, so considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).

For the reasons set forth below, the petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **GRANTED**—as authorized the petition fee (\$665.00) is charged to Deposit Account 19-4375.

BACKGROUND

The record reflects that:

- on 5 May, 2003, the Office mailed a non-final Office action—and appears to have re-mailed the action on 28 May, 2003—to Petitioner's then-current address of record (Peter N. Losos, Losos & Keegan, 5th Floor, 1146 19th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036-3723), with a reply due absent extension of time on or before 28 August, 2003;
- Petitioner failed to reply to that Office Action;
- on 25 November, 2003, Petitioner filed a Notice of Change of Address (Stevens Davis Miller & Mosher LLP, 1615 L St. NW/Ste. 850, Washington, DC 20036-5622);
- Notice of Abandonment was mailed to the new address on 31 December, 2003;

- the showing of Petitioner Peter N. Lalos (Reg. No. 19,789) includes his statement and a declaration of a member of his staff to the effect that because a merger-move was taking place on or about 1 March, 2002, mail was held at the post office and collected at "intervals 2-3 times per week"—however, in addition to failing to timely—i.e., for more than 20 months—follow the proper Notice procedure for a Change of Address, Petitioner provides no documentation in support of the allegations;
- Petitioner alleges that "[d]uring a routine status check of the file on November 25, 2003, [Petitioner] noted [that] no action had been received from the Patent Office for more than two years . . ." (Emphasis supplied);
- Petitioner has filed a "Request for Reconsideration," which he indicates is his reply to the outstanding Office action—which he misdates as 28 April, 2003—and made the statement of unintentional delay, while authorizing the fee for a petition alleging unintentional delay (under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b)).

NOTE: Docketing of Status Inquiries at six- (6-) month intervals following the filing of papers/replies may be prudent practice to demonstrate diligence when lengthy delays occur in matters such as this.

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).¹

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority. The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.²

¹ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

² Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.

Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.³ Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).⁴ And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.⁵ Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care.

By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁶ And petitions calling upon the authority of the Commissioner to act, such as that under 37 C.F.R. §1.181,⁷ require diligence as to their filing—i.e., the petition must be filed within two months of the action complained of.

Allegations as to Unintentional Delay

The requirements of a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are: petition, fee, reply, statement

³ See: *Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice*, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

⁴ See: *In re Application of G*, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

⁵ See: *Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment*, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office supra.

⁶ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

⁷ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.181 provide:
§ 1.181 Petition to the Commissioner.

(a) Petition may be taken to the Commissioner:

(1) From any action or requirement of any examiner in the *ex parte* prosecution of an application, or in the *ex parte* or *inter partes* prosecution of a reexamination proceeding which is not subject to appeal to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences or to the court;

(2) In cases in which a statute or the rules specify that the matter is to be determined directly by or reviewed by the Commissioner; and

(3) To invoke the supervisory authority of the Commissioner in appropriate circumstances. For petitions in interferences, see § 1.644.

(b) Any such petition must contain a statement of the facts involved and the point or points to be reviewed and the action requested. Briefs or memoranda, if any, in support thereof should accompany or be embodied in the petition; and where facts are to be proven, the proof in the form of affidavits or declarations (and exhibits, if any) must accompany the petition.

(c) When a petition is taken from an action or requirement of an examiner in the *ex parte* prosecution of an application, or in the *ex parte* or *inter partes* prosecution of a reexamination proceeding, it may be required that there have been a proper request for reconsideration (§ 1.111) and a repeated action by the examiner. The examiner may be directed by the Commissioner to furnish a written statement, within a specified time, setting forth the reasons for his or her decision upon the matters averred in the petition, supplying a copy to the petitioner.

(d) Where a fee is required for a petition to the Commissioner the appropriate section of this part will so indicate. If any required fee does not accompany the petition, the petition will be dismissed.

(e) Oral hearing will not be granted except when considered necessary by the Commissioner.

(f) The mere filing of a petition will not stay any period for reply that may be running against the application, nor act as a stay of other proceedings. Any petition under this part not filed within two months of the mailing date of the action or notice from which relief is requested may be dismissed as untimely, except as otherwise provided. This two-month period is not extendable.

(g) The Commissioner may delegate to appropriate Patent and Trademark Office officials the determination of petitions.
[24 Fed. Reg. 10332, Dec. 22, 1959; 34 Fed. Reg. 18857, Nov. 26, 1969; paras. (d) and (g), 47 Fed. Reg. 41278, Sept. 17, 1982, effective Oct. 1, 1982; para. (a), 49 Fed. Reg. 48416, Dec. 12, 1984, effective Feb. 11, 1985; para. (f) revised, 65 Fed. Reg. 54604, Sept. 8, 2000, effective Nov. 7, 2000; paras. (a) and (c) revised, 65 Fed. Reg. 76756, Dec. 7, 2000, effective Feb. 5, 2001]

and—if applicable—terminal disclaimer.


Applicable here are only the petition, fee, reply and statement requirements, which Petitioner has satisfied.

CONCLUSION

Petitioner has satisfied the requirements under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b), the petition hereby is **granted**.

The instant application is forwarded to Technology Center 2600 for further processing in due course.

Telephone inquiries concerning this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (703) 305-9199.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Gillon", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John J. Gillon, Jr.
Senior Attorney
Office of Petitions